

and States rights, as clearly found in our Constitution—and empowering local communities, State legislatures, Governors, and tribes to manage their resources, to grow economic opportunity, and to find and determine their own destiny.

In fact, it is time for Washington to listen to the States and it is time for Washington, DC, to listen to Montana.

I have always said one of the best decisions I ever made in my life was when I picked my great-great-grandmother. She got her family out to Montana, and she is buried in a small country cemetery just east of a small town called Conrad, MT. On her headstone, in this very remote small country cemetery, reads three simple words: “saved by grace.” She placed her ultimate faith in her God, not in her government.

It is an honor to stand here today on the Senate floor to serve as Montana’s voice in Washington. I will continue working to bring more Montana solutions to Washington and get it working again for all Montanans.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

CONGRATULATING SENATOR DAINES

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I want to congratulate our freshman colleague from Montana on his initial speech, and particularly to second his observations about the devastation in the coalfields of America. We have a depression in the eastern part of my State as a direct result of this administration and the EPA, and I know it has affected the great State of Montana as well. So among the many insightful observations the Senator from Montana made, I particularly appreciate his thoughts about energy.

CLOTURE MOTION

Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk for the committee-reported amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the committee-reported substitute amendment to S. 178, a bill to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, Tom Cotton, James Lankford, David Vitter, Richard Burr, Chuck Grassley, Joni Ernst, Pat Roberts, Mike Rounds, James E. Risch, Daniel Coats, James M. Inhofe, Shelley Moore Capito, Mark Kirk, Cory Gardner, Thom Tillis.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk for the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on S. 178, a bill to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, Tom Cotton, James Lankford, David Vitter, Richard Burr, Chuck Grassley, Joni Ernst, Pat Roberts, Mike Rounds, James E. Risch, Daniel Coats, James M. Inhofe, Shelley Moore Capito, Mark Kirk, Cory Gardner, Thom Tillis.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls be waived with respect to these cloture motions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHATZ. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHATZ. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for up to 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LYNCH NOMINATION

Mr. SCHATZ. Madam President, I rise today to speak on two topics. The first topic is to urge my colleagues to bring up the vote on Loretta Lynch right away. The delay on her nomination to be Attorney General has gone on long enough, and there are no longer any legitimate excuses. She is by all accounts an excellent candidate. She is highly qualified, and she has bipartisan support in the Committee on the Judiciary. No one has questioned her stellar credentials. Her nomination has been held up for too long. In fact, Republicans have held up her nomination longer than the five most recent Attorney General nominees combined. But now her nomination has been tied to a piece of legislation that Republicans themselves have poisoned. Why are they putting poison pills in their own legislation? They took a perfectly good bipartisan bill and ensured it would go nowhere. Then they took a perfectly qualified Attorney General nominee and tied her vote to their poisoned legislation.

The majority party is getting in its own way when it comes to the major responsibilities of governing. It is time

for the Republicans to act like the majority and govern. This is the difference between being in the majority and being in the minority. Putting poison pills in legislative vehicles may be an odious practice, but it is normally reserved for the minority party—the party that is not in charge. Generally speaking, you do not poison your own piece of legislation.

The American people have given the keys to the car to the Republican Party, and now they need to drive the car. This is the difference between being in the minority and the majority. Governing includes giving advice and consent on nominations. This is a particularly important nomination. The Attorney General is the top law enforcement official in the country. He or she is responsible for enforcing our Nation’s laws, protecting national security, and upholding our constitutional rights.

This last role is vital at a time when the DOJ is investigating violations of constitutional rights by local law enforcement agencies. Just last week, DOJ released a scathing report on the deep and pervasive racism in the Ferguson, MO, police force. In that report, the Department described shocking practices: systematic targeting of African Americans and an abuse of power to collect enormous amounts in fees. In a city with a population of 21,000 people, 16,000 people have outstanding arrest warrants—16,000 people. That is three-quarters of Ferguson’s population. Those arrest warrants are overwhelmingly issued to Ferguson’s African-American population—92 percent, to be exact. Emails and other documents DOJ collected prove the Ferguson police force acted with racial animus.

If confirmed, Ms. Lynch would continue DOJ’s task of investigating unconstitutional policing across the country. She faces weighty issues—the over-militarization of our police, our policing practices, and reforming our sentencing guidelines, just to name a few.

As the first African-American woman to serve as Attorney General, this would be a historic nomination and a crucial one.

At a time when the public’s trust in law enforcement is badly eroded, we need to confirm Ms. Lynch as our Attorney General and let her get to work on fighting for our civil rights.

THE HOUSE BUDGET

Mr. SCHATZ. Madam President, today the House released its budget proposal. It is a proposal divorced from reality that seeks to balance the budget on the backs of those in the country who can least afford it. It takes from the middle class and gives to the ultra-wealthy.

Without a doubt, my colleagues and I will have much more to say about the Republican budget in the coming weeks and months, but today I want to discuss a section of the budget that seeks

to deny the very real and very current threat of climate change to our public health and military readiness.

The Department of Defense is responsible for protecting the security of the United States, and that requires taking into consideration every threat and every threat multiplier that affects the global security environment and our national interests, including climate change. That is why the military spends considerable time assessing the effects climate change could have on its facilities, capabilities, and missions, and how those effects could undermine its ability to protect our national security. It is unfortunate that today in their budget proposal House Republicans said that this planning is wasteful spending. I am as against wasteful spending as anyone, but preparing for threats to our national security planning and operations is the opposite of wasteful. It is prudent.

Today, I want to talk about how a climate change prohibition would tie the hands of our national defense strategy.

Climate change affects our national security in two major ways.

First, the DOD has warned that climate change is likely to impact the military's facilities and capabilities. In particular, America's military bases may be particularly vulnerable to climate change.

According to a 2008 National Intelligence Council finding, "more than 30 U.S. military installations were already facing elevated levels of risk from rising sea levels." In my home State of Hawaii, for example, Navy and Marine Corps installations such as Pearl Harbor and Marine Corps base Kaneohe Bay are literally on the water's edge.

According to the Department of Defense, the combination of decreasing sea ice, rising sea levels, and thawing permafrost along the coast of Alaska has increased coastal erosion at several Air Force radar early warning and communication installations. This coastal erosion has already damaged roads, seawalls, and runways at our bases.

Second, climate change exacerbates the drivers of global instability, including drought, food shortages, water scarcity, and pandemic disease.

ADM Sam Locklear III, commander of the USPACOM, said that the biggest long-term security threat in the region is climate change because "it is probably the most likely thing that is going to happen . . . that will cripple the security environment."

I would like to make a point here. The Department of Defense is in no position to get caught up in our partisan or ideological battles. The Department of Defense has to deal with what is. The Department of Defense has to prepare for and contend with reality. And we should have debates on the Senate floor. We should talk about whether the President's clean powerplant is the right approach. We should talk about

how we should approach international agreements coming into the Paris Accords. Let's have that debate about whether a carbon fee is the most prudent approach. But what we should not do is make it impossible for the Department of Defense to do its planning and preparation. That is what the House budget does.

In its 2014 QDR, the Department of Defense warned that the effects of climate change "are threat multipliers that will aggravate stressors abroad such as poverty, environmental degradation, political instability, and social tensions—conditions that can enable terrorist activity and other forms of violence." The stresses could break the backs of weak governments and institutions in countries around the world where the United States has enduring interests. In particular, the National Intelligence Council stated in its "Global Trends 2030" report that climate change will pose stiff challenges to governance in places such as Afghanistan and Pakistan.

That is why I find it ironic that many of my Republican colleagues who are so committed to slowing the pace of our withdrawal from Afghanistan on the premise that doing so will preserve our security gains and keep Afghanistan stable are now tying the hands of the national security community so that they are unable to study the security effects of climate change on Afghanistan and the region. Again, I don't think we should tell them how to study it, what conclusions to draw, what preparations to make, except to say that we should stay out of their way as they do their security planning, as they do their security preparation. I am not suggesting that they take my view on climate change; I am suggesting that they be allowed to deal with what is and that they not be sucked into a partisan ideological battle over climate change. They don't have the luxury of getting sucked into a partisan ideological battle when it comes to climate change. They have to deal with what is because they are responsible for our national defense.

Fortunately, while some in Congress play politics, our military leaders are clear-eyed about the current and present threats posed by climate change, and they are making the necessary investments in knowledge of impacts to their readiness and to regional and global conflicts. We need to back them up and make sure that climate deniers do not tie one hand behind their back while they work to understand the threats to defend our country.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to enter into a colloquy with the senior Senator from Illinois and the junior Senator from New Jersey, as well as the junior Senator from Arizona.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SMARTER SENTENCING ACT

Mr. LEE. Madam President, we rise today to speak in favor of the Smarter Sentencing Act, a bipartisan piece of legislation that would make targeted reforms to mandatory minimum sentences for nonviolent drug offenders.

I was proud to join my distinguished colleague from Illinois, Senator DURBIN, in introducing this legislation. He and I wish to thank our cosponsors, Senators JEFF FLAKE, CORY BOOKER, TED CRUZ, PAT LEAHY, RAND PAUL, SHELDON WHITEHOUSE, JOHNNY ISAKSON, and CHRIS COONS.

I also wish to thank the lead sponsors of the House version of the Smarter Sentencing Act, Congressmen RAÚL LABRADOR and BOBBY SCOTT.

It is not often that you see a political coalition such as this one on Capitol Hill. It reflects the importance of an issue whose time has come—reforming our Federal sentencing laws. We come to the floor today to explain what the Smarter Sentencing Act does and to address some common misconceptions about our bill that have been expressed on the Senate floor.

I ask my friend and colleague Senator DURBIN: What problems does the Smarter Sentencing Act seek to address?

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Utah not only for his leadership on this issue but for the fact that we have been able to work together on an issue that is not considered to be simple in nature. It is challenging, complex, and controversial in some respects. As the Senator mentioned at the outset, we have done it on a bipartisan basis. If one looks at the cosponsors of the Smarter Sentencing Act, they span the political spectrum.

I was standing at our press conference—as the Senator from Utah was speaking—next to Senator TED CRUZ. Some said: DURBIN and CRUZ are on the same bill? As the saying goes around here, obviously one of us has not read it. The fact is that we both read it, and we both understand the importance of this undertaking.

Our criminal justice system in America is in crisis. The United States of America holds more prisoners, by far, than any other country in the world. The Federal prison population has grown by 750 percent since 1980 and our Federal prisons are approximately 30 percent over capacity.

Over the past 30 years, spending on Federal incarceration has increased more than 1,100 percent. Our exploding prison population now consumes a quarter of the Justice Department's